

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested. Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 35-48 are pending in the application, with claims 35, 41 and 48 being the independent claims. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all outstanding objections and rejections.

Interview

Applicants' representatives appreciate the courtesies extended in the interview of August 27, 2003 and subsequent informal telephone conversations.

Claims rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1, 2, 5-11, 17-19, 21, 25-31, 35, 36, 39-43, 45, 47 and 48 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S Patent No. 6,578,496 B1 to Guard et.al. ("the Guard patent"). Claims 1, 2, 5-11, 17-19, 21 and 25-31 have been canceled, thereby rendering the rejection to those claims moot. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of claims 1, 2, 5-11, 17-19, 21 and 25-31 in subsequent applications.

As indicated in the Interview Summary Record, Examiner agreed that the rejection of claims 35, 36, 39-43, 45, 47 and 48 over the Guard patent was improper because the Guard patent failed to disclose all of the claimed features. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 35, 36, 39-43, 45, 47 and 48 are allowable.

Claims rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 3, 4, 12-16, 20, 32-34, 37, 38, 44 and 46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Guard patent. Claims 3, 4, 12-16, 20 and 32-34 have been

canceled, thereby rendering the rejection to those claims moot. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of claims 3, 4, 12-16, 20 and 32-34 in subsequent applications.

Claims 37, 38, 44 and 46 are allowable at least for their dependencies on one of independent claims 36 and 41.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection in the Office Action have been properly traversed or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all outstanding rejections. Applicants believe that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

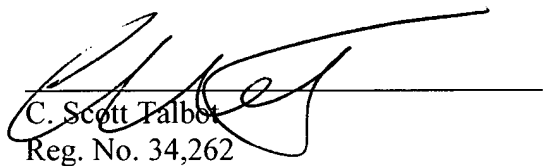
Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Dated: October 6, 2003

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